

PAM.
MISC.

NO. 900.

How to Prepare for the Visit of a Missionary

BY THE REVEREND EVERETT P. SMITH

1. Preliminary

FIND out as much about him and his field as you can. Make up your mind what kind of people could be permanently interested in his work, and in your plans give the preference to them in regard to time, place, and character of meeting.

2. Call a meeting of the leaders of the Church societies that you wish to interest and talk to them of the unusually good chance to hear of missions at first hand from Mr. A——. When you have interested them, ask them if they wish their societies to be considered in arranging his appointments and what they can do to secure a large attendance

3. Suggest your outline of meetings and your general plan of preparation, and then divide the work of your committee. One has influence with the local newspapers and should be made responsible for the press notices; another, who

knows some one in a printing-office and can secure good work at fair rates, should be given charge of the printing; bicyclists and those who may have a carriage at their disposal can be made responsible for the distribution of notices and board leaflets in outlying parishes. In general, give each member of the committee something to do.

II. Character and Number of Meetings

1. Have as many different kinds of meetings as you have kinds of listeners, unless prevented by the shortness of the missionary's visit. Several small audiences, each with its special grade of intelligence and interest in missionary matters, offer a better opportunity for a speaker than a far larger general gathering. Children are most interested to hear about work among children, the Woman's Auxiliary in talks about woman's work, the Brotherhood of St. Andrew and men in general are most interested in work among men. Recognize this fact if possible in planning for the missionary's visit.

2. Hold the meetings in places that are accessible and not too large. A small church or hall full of people is far better than a place twice as large, but little more than half filled. Have the meeting where the accommodations are elastic (but do not bring in extra chairs until

they are needed), or that allows for overflowing, if occasion calls for it, into a larger place in the same building. In arranging for a meeting in a parish, first tell the local authorities what you need in the way of accommodations and provision for an overflow into a larger place if necessary, and find out whether they will be furnished, before you agree to give the parish the privilege of the meeting.

3. Have every meeting short. Let both missionary and his listeners understand that there will be an after-meeting for their mutual acquaintance and informal conference. Then give the audience to the missionary, unwearied by a long introduction or addresses by local speakers.

4. When the reporter comes to you, talk to him as a man who can be interested in missions; you will naturally pick out the best points of the address as your text. If you win his interest he will know how to group the points so as to have his article accepted by the editor. Incidentally, remember that press reports of the earlier meetings in a series are invaluable in gathering an audience for the others.

5. Where possible, arrange maps and charts illustrating the conditions of the country from which your missionary comes in such a way as to emphasize its needs, and in order to fix in mind the

work of our Church there, have a supply of the best leaflets of the Mission Board upon it, distributed at the close of the meeting.

III. Character and Number of Notifications

1. Two weeks or more before the meeting print a general leaflet giving full particulars for Churchpeople. Do not let it beg for an audience. Simply state who the missionary is, what his work is, whom it will interest and why. Add a list of his appointments and the names of the committee representing the various societies you are especially aiming to interest. If the leaflet shows that the committee believes the meeting will be excellent, that is enough. Next find out how many copies can be distributed among the members of each society. Add to this number a liberal allowance for distribution in the pews of churches. Have them printed and order the printer to keep the type standing, as you may want more copies. You probably will.

Have your printing done early. (a) You can then furnish a leaflet as material for local parish papers. (b) You can mail advance copies to clergy and others with a note of comment that will secure their interest. (c) An important point. You can mail your programme to the missionary who is coming and by adding the probable character of each audience

(age, sex, and missionary intelligence) you will greatly help him to choose from his material such facts as will interest them.

This general leaflet should be distributed through the churches and societies early. People have many engagements, and ten days or two weeks is not too soon, for your general leaflet is not to be your only notification.

2. Two or three kinds of leaflets from the Church Missions House should be distributed carefully but generously in the churches on the Sunday after the distribution of the general leaflet, and just before the series of meetings. These leaflets should have pictures and description of some one place or kind of work. As you will be the best judge of what will interest your neighbors, write to the Secretary of the Church Missions House for a sample of all leaflets on the given country that are available for general distribution. Select from these the best one for each class of people you are working to interest and order the quantity you will need. At the same time order from a local dealer some rubber stamps, each giving subject, time and place of one of the meetings. Then when your supply comes, stamp the children's leaflet with the notice of the children's meeting and distribute among Sunday-schools, stamp the 'Woman's Auxiliary leaflet with the notice of the

meeting you specially wish women to attend, and the leaflet for the general public with the notice of the general meeting, etc. Distribution of leaflets must be according to the meetings they advertise, and they will both sort your audiences and largely prevent the attendance from being unequal at the different meetings. Men and boys of the Brotherhood of St. Andrew will help in this distribution, and the leaflets not taken home at the first opportunity should be collected for distribution after the final meeting.

3. For special notices use existing machinery and send through the secretaries of Church societies a notice to their members that their organization will hold its next meeting at ———, and that it will be addressed by ———. Having found out definitely at the first committee meeting from the leader of each society whether this notification of the secretary will be by postal to each member or merely by a general notice, you will know how far to supplement this notification by your own printed leaflet or the Mission Board leaflet.

4. Notices by the clergy. Remember that the average clergyman dislikes to add to his usual long list of announcements, and therefore (a) try to interest him personally in the meetings before you ask him to give out any notice. If you succeed in this the missionary notice

will be clear and emphatic. (b) When you have not had the opportunity to have a clergyman informed personally or by letter of the meetings, ask him to call attention to the general leaflet when it is distributed in the pews, and later, just before the actual visit of the missionary, to read the list of his appointments.

5. On the day of meetings put a line in the newspapers, giving their subject, time and place.

6. Reminders by personal note or telephone on the days of meeting are very useful in securing attendance. See that the Churchpeople of most influence in the community, and upon whom you rely for missionary support, get this reminder from some friend. It is not wise to beg for even the most desirable listener. "Shall I see you at the meeting? It is going to be a capital one"; or "Shall I call for you on my way?" is enough.

IV. Is It Worth While?

Yes, good missionary meetings do not *happen*, any more than good political meetings or good concerts. They must be planned to suit their audience, and the people who are to make up their audience must be informed and brought together. There is much at stake when a missionary visits a parish. People expect to hear of the needs and progress of

the Kingdom of God. If the address treats them as children to be amused, or if it is far above their heads, they do not put it down to a lack of care on the part of the committee of arrangements or to ignorance of local conditions on the part of the missionary, but they think the dulness a necessary part of missions.

The visit of a missionary is the opportunity for telling men the facts of missions. They are the seed thoughts of world-wide Christianity. Is it worth while to see that they are carefully planted?

Every unsuccessful missionary meeting hinders, and every successful one helps, the coming of Christ's Kingdom.

Pamphlet 900.

Copies of this pamphlet may be obtained from
THE CORRESPONDING SECRETARY, *Church Missions*
House, 281 Fourth Avenue, New York.

All offerings for missions should be sent to MR.
GEORGE C. THOMAS, TREASURER, *Church Missions*
House, 281 Fourth Avenue, New York.